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Mavroules proposes panel to plan against terrorism

President Ronald Reagan should appoint a national commission to recommend policies to prevent acts of terrorism such as the truck bombing attack that killed 241 US servicemen in Beirut last October, Rep. Nicholas Mavroules (D-Mass.) said yesterday.

In a two-page letter to the President, Mavroules urged Reagan to empanel a commission to review security procedures at US embassies, foreign military installations and public buildings in the United States.

Such a panel, he said, should be empowered to communicate with Western allies about intelligence strategies to combat the threat of terrorist violence.

"Security from this type of violence will not be achieved simply by the construction of fences or barriers," he wrote, alluding to the concrete barricades erected in the last few weeks in front of the White House and other Washington buildings.

Mavroules, a member of the Armed Services subcommittee that criticized security measures at the Marine compound at the time of the Beirut bombing, said he was "in full agreement" with Reagan that, as President, he bears the ultimate responsibility for the tragedy.

"He got us into the mission there. He sent the Marines there and consulted Congress later, remember," Mavroules said at a press conference

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— Rep. Nicholas Mavroules

in Lynnfield. "But many of us in Congress have been there and at no time did we recommend that they take any other security actions. There is enough blame to go around."

Mavroules said the problem with Reagan's statement is that by "accepting responsibility he is circumventing any action against military personnel. I think that's wrong."

The issue of security and the role of the Marines stationed in Beirut will top the agenda when Congress returns late next month, he said. If their stated goal as peacekeepers is to be expanded "as I believe it has been," he said, "we have to redefine our mission itself in Lebanon."